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REMARKS

The present amendment is in response to the Office Action dated December 9, 2005, wherein claims 1-43 are pending. The Action states that claims 17-28 are allowed. The Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4-9, 16, 29-31, 33-38, and 43, and objects to claims 3, 10-15, 32, and 39-42 for being dependent on rejected base claims. By the present amendment, claims 1, 2, 4-9, 16, 29-31, 33-38, and 43 have been canceled and claims 3, 10, 32, and 39 have been amended so that claims 3, 10-15, 32, and 39-42 no longer depend on a rejected base claim. Accordingly, claims 3, 10-15, 17-28, 32, and 39-42 are pending in the present application. Reconsideration and allowance of pending claims 3, 10-15, 17-28, 32, and 39-42, in view of the amendments and the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102:

Page 2 of the Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Steudle (U.S. 5,005,403). Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 16 have been canceled in the above amendments thereby rendering this rejection moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection as to claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 16. Applicants note, however, that claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 16 are canceled without prejudice and Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue any patentable subject matter contained in claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 16 at a later time.

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Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Page 3 of the Action rejects claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Steundle in further view of Arbabi (U.S. 5,461,699). Claim 6 has been canceled in the above amendments thereby rendering this rejection moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection as to claim 6. Applicants note, however, that claim 6 is canceled without prejudice and Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue any patentable subject matter contained in claim 6 at a later time.

Page 4 of the Action rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Steundle in further view of Davis (U.S. 4,951,683). Claim 7 has been canceled in the above amendments thereby rendering this rejection moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection as to claim 7. Applicants note, however, that claim 7 is canceled without prejudice and Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue any patentable subject matter contained in claim 7 at a later time.

Page 4 of the Action rejects claims 29-31 and 33-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Davis in further view of Steundle. Claims 29-31 and 33-38 have been canceled in the above amendments thereby rendering this rejection moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection as to claims 29-31 and 33-38. Applicants note, however, that claims 29-31 and 33-38 are canceled without prejudice and Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue any patentable subject matter contained in claims 29-31 and 33-38 at a later time.

Page 6 of the Action rejects claim 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Davis in further view of Steundle. Claim 43 has been canceled in the above amendments thereby rendering this rejection moot. Applicants therefore respectfully

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request withdrawal of the rejection as to claim 43. Applicants note, however, that claim 43 is canceled without prejudice and Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue any patentable subject matter contained in claim 43 at a later time.

Page 7 of the Action rejects claim 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Steundle and Davis in further view of Arbab. Claim 36 has been canceled in the above amendments thereby rendering this rejection moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection as to claim 36. Applicants note, however, that claim 36 is canceled without prejudice and Applicants expressly reserves the right to pursue any patentable subject matter contained in claim 36 at a later time.

Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants acknowledges that on page 7 claims 17-28 are indicated to be allowable.

Claim Objections:

Page 8 of the Action objects to claims 3, 10-15, 32, and 39-42 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Action states that claims 3, 10-15, 32, and 39-42 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 3, 10-15, 32, and 39-42 have been rewritten in independent form in the above amendments. Claims 3, 10-15, 32, and 39-42 are therefore allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection as to claims 3, 10-15, 32, and 39-42.

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CONCLUSION

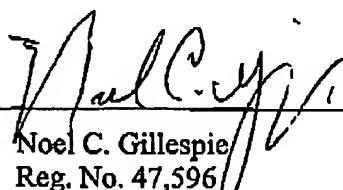
In order to expedite the issuance of the allowed and allowable claims, Applicants have canceled the rejected claims and rewritten the claims that are objected to so that they do not depend on a rejected base claims. This should not be seen, however, as an admission that the canceled claims are not patentable. Nor should it be assumed that Applicants agree with the rejections contained in the Action.

Accordingly, Applicant believes that given the above amendments and remarks, the claims are now in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested. Prior to the Amendments there were 43 total claims and 3 independent claims. After the Amendments there are 24 total claims and 5 independent claims. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge \$200 to Deposit Account No. 13-0480 for the two excess independent claims. Please charge any and all additional fees to complete this filing, referencing Attorney Docket Number 67175524.001403. The Examiner is also requested to credit any overpayments with this response to deposit account 13-0480 referencing attorney docket no. 67175524-001403.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 9, 2006

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